United Nations

Press Release

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MONDAY HIGHLIGHTS

- Security Council holds consultations to review implementation of resolution 687 (1991) of 3 April.

- Secretary-General welcomes discussions between United States President, Greek Prime Minister and Turkish President on question of Cyprus; says are "helpful" to his mission of good offices.

- Secretary-General is encouraged by developments over the weekend which he says enhance prospects for launching negotiated settlement of Middle East situation.

- Iraq informs United Nations inspection team that it has carried out biological research for defensive military purposes.

- Permanent Observer for Republic of Korea meets with Secretary-General to discuss admission of South Korea to United Nations.

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The Security Council continued today its informal consultations to review the provisions of its resolution 687 (1991) of 3 April, which set the terms for the cease-fire in the Persian Gulf conflict.

Speaking to correspondents after Council consultations, the United Kingdom's Permanent Representative, David Hannay, said the vast majority of the Council had taken the view that there was no justification for any changes in the sanctions regime, whether it was with regard to civilian imports into Iraq or with regard to the arms embargo, because of the non-compliance by the Iraqi Government with resolution 687 (1991).

In addition, Mr. Hannay said, Council members were continuing consultations at the moment on the humanitarian issues that were raised by the Secretary-General's Executive Delegate, Saddrudin Aga Khan. He said the 60-day and 120-day reviews, provided for under the resolution, had led to very broad support for the view that there was no justification for a change in the matter of imports into Iraq and the matter of arms trade.

(more)

For information media—not an official record

The Council was currently discussing a resolution which would reinforce the powers of the Special Commission in certain respects, mainly in relation to the nuclear inspections, Mr. Hannay said.

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The Secretary-General's spokeswoman told correspondents today that Mr. Pérez de Cuéllar had been in touch with leaders and senior officials of members of the Security Council, including United States President George Bush, concerning the question of Cyprus. She said Mr. Pérez de Cuéllar welcomed the personal effort made by President Bush in support of the Secretary-General's mission of good offices. The Secretary-General felt, she said, that the outcome of Mr. Bush's discussions with Prime Minister Constantine Mitsoutakis of Greece and President Turgut Ozal of Turkey was helpful to his efforts and also welcomed by the two leaders on Cyprus.

The spokeswoman went on to say that the Secretary-General's Special Representative on Cyprus, Oscar Camilion, and the Alternate Special Representative, Gustave Feissel, had just completed a first round of "useful talks" in Ankara, Athens, and with leaders of both communities in Cyprus. A second round of talks was to take place during the second half of August, after which the Secretary-General would report to the Security Council on his assessment of the situation.

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The Secretary-General's spokeswoman said today that Mr. Pérez de Cuéllar had been following with great interest the visit of United States Secretary of State James Baker to the Middle East and North Africa. The Secretary-General was encouraged by developments over the weekend which indicated that progress was being made, and that the prospects for launching a negotiating process had been significantly enhanced, she said.

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Iraq has informed a United Nations inspection team that it has carried out biological research for defensive military purposes, according to a statement issued by the United Nations Special Commission set up under Security Council resolution 687 (1991) on a cease-fire in the Gulf conflict.

Iraqi authorities said the research was begun in 1986 at a facility some 35 kilometres south-east of Baghdad and was terminated in August 1990, and that the agents on which the research was being carried out had been destroyed.

The Iraqi authorities told the United Nations team that the above information had been withheld until now "because it would have been misconstrued by the world at large". The Iraqis said that "no production or weaponization of biological agents" had taken place.

(more)

The 28-person inspection team of 24 experts from 9 countries (Australia, Canada, Czechoslovakia, France, Germany, Soviet Union, Sweden, United Kingdom and United States, plus four support personnel) had been in Iraq since 2 August.

In a related development, United Kingdom Permanent Representative, David Hannay told correspondents today that Iraq had admitted, for the first time, to the existence of a programme to separate plutonium which had resulted in the production of a small amount of the material. He said the Council had received the information as a result of the fourth nuclear inspection team which is currently in Iraq.

In other news from the Gulf, the Officer-in-Charge of overseeing the return of Kuwaiti property, Richard Foran, has received information today that 225 gold bricks had been handed over to Kuwait at the Iraqi/Saudi Arabian border.

A United Nations spokesman said today that the goal of returning 300 gold bricks per day seemed realistic, and the return of the gold, bank notes and coins was expected to be completed in about one month.

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The Permanent Observer for the Republic of Korea, Chang Hee Roe, met with the Secretary-General today to discuss the admission of South Korea to the United Nations.

Following the meeting, Chang Hee Roe told correspondents at a press conference that he was hopeful that the simultaneous admission of the two Koreas would result in the improvement of relations between the two countries.

He said the Security Council would probably take up the issue of Korean membership on Thursday and the General Assembly would vote on the issue on 17 September.

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